

I have sent the following letter to the *Muncie Star Press* in response to a letter to the editor published today criticizing one of the Medicare Prescription Drug Card Fairs I will be holding next week.

Dear Editor:

I read with great interest the Guest Column that you published Friday by Chrystal Smart entitled, "Pence Takes Drug Message To Wrong Audience." In her essay, the writer expresses criticism for my efforts to assist seniors with enrollment into the new Prescription Drug Discount Card program through Medicare by hosting a series of Prescription Drug Fairs across the district next week. She notes that Westminster Village is the retirement location for "the county's, if not the state's, wealthier senior citizens," and asks, "Why, pray tell, would they be in need of senior drug discounts?"

She points out correctly that "there are residents at other facilities besides Westminster Village in dire need of assistance with their medication costs." She then asks, "When are the scheduled information sessions for them?"

Chrystal, I am so glad you asked.

In fact, beginning Monday with the help of experts from Medicare, I will be hosting a series of five Prescription Drug Discount Card Fairs with the event in Muncie taking place on Wednesday, May 26, 2004 at 1:30 p.m. at Westminster Village. Here's a list of all of the upcoming events and times:

May 24

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Green Tree Catered Living
4895 Pine Ridge Drive
Columbus, IN 47201

May 25

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Richmond Senior Community Center
1600 S. 2nd Street
Richmond, IN 47374

3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Crown Pointe Assisted Living Center
2727 Crown Pointe Circle
Anderson, IN 46012
(Half mile east of Scatterfield Road on SR 32)

May 26

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

River Terrace Estates

400 Caylor Boulevard

Bluffton, IN 46714

(2 miles northwest of SR 1 on SR 116)

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Westminster Village

5801 Bethel Avenue

Muncie, IN 47304

All of these events are open to the public and the locations for these sessions were selected exclusively to accommodate the largest number of constituents in as comfortable a setting as possible. Westminster Village was kind enough to open their facility to our offices to host this program, but our goal is to reach out to the entire community and invite any and all seniors or their families to attend.

Chrystal, as you may know, I actually voted against the new prescription drug entitlement because I felt that our nation should only provide financial help to seniors struggling with the cost of prescription drugs, rather than the one-size-fits-all program that Congress enacted. In short, I agree with your sentiment that government assistance should always focus on those in need.

That being said, as the congressman for all the people of the 6th District, I felt it was important to make an effort to help seniors understand the new prescription drug discount card with these public Medicare workshops.

It is the greatest privilege of my life to be your congressman, Chrystal, and I pray daily that I might do so in a manner that reflects a servant's heart even when people misunderstand my purpose or intentions.

Respectfully,
Rep. Mike Pence